

Working together to reinvigorate clinical audit – a conference for local clinical audit professionals

29th and 30th April 2009, The Belfry, Sutton Coldfield

Summary

On 29th April 2009, The Healthcare Quality Improvement Partnership (HQIP) opened their inaugural local clinical audit conference in Sutton Coldfield: **‘Working together to reinvigorate clinical audit’**. The conference addressed the challenges and opportunities ahead - providing a forum for discussion and advice on matters relating to clinical audit.

What's more, delegates had an opportunity to question those leading the development of the clinical audit strategy. The conference also:

- consulted on HQIP's local clinical audit work programme
- unveiled new products and tools for discussion and validation
- encouraged and facilitated the growth of regional audit networks
- shared best practice and ideas to reinvigorate clinical audit.

The conference was attended by around 400 delegates across 2 days, bringing together those who support and facilitate local clinical audit activity across England.

The primary purpose of the conference was to showcase the emphasis being placed on clinical audit as part of the centrally driven Departmental drive expressed in the Next Stage Review, which puts quality at the heart of the NHS.

The conference also aimed to enable opportunities for local audit staff to network, share experiences, gain support and express views, as well as to stress that there exists strong organisational and intellectual support for audit within HQIP, backed by central funding.

Programme

The conference was opened by Robin Burgess, Chief Executive of HQIP, who spoke about the charity's work programme and its initiatives to revitalise clinical audit. He stressed the aim of the conference, to recognise and reward the work of local audit specialists around the country.

Professor Sir Bruce Keogh, NHS Medical Director, delivered the keynote address, placing audit at the heart of the Darzi review. He stressed how important the collection and sharing of data is in driving quality, and outlined the various steps the Government is taking to implement the Darzi vision.

The afternoon also featured an invigorating and unusual session by Nigel Risner, a noted author, TV presenter and motivational speaker, as well as a Q&A panel made up of Robin Sasaru, Chairman of NAGG, Martin Ferris, Head of Clinical Audit and Effectiveness at NHS Sheffield, Robin Ufton, EKCAS Manager at East Kent Hospitals NHS Trust, Julie Royce, Associate Director of NICE and Helen Brady from Royal Surrey County Hospital NHS Trust.

Day 1 closed with HQIP's 2009 clinical audit awards, which were designed to celebrate achievement in clinical audit. The awards attracted entries from around the country and the winners were:

- **Sustained Improvement:** Hampshire Partnership NHS Trust for their Audit to increase the incidence of appropriate and timely recording of outcome measures for young people at Leigh House Hospital.
- **Patient Involvement:** Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust for their audit of Child Derived Standards of Paediatric Pain Management by their Peers
- **Clinical Audit Programme of the Year:** Southampton University Hospitals NHS Trust for their 2008-9 programme

The second day, chaired by HQIP's chairman, Dr Paul Lelliott, started with Professor Nick Black, chairman of NCAAG who gave a speech on the need to raise the profile of audit, as well as on the overall aims of the national programme, including the role of HQIP.

Julie Royce, Associate Director of NICE followed with a presentation designed to explain how to put policy into practice. Danny Keenan of the Care Quality Commission closed the conference by talking about clinical audit within regulation.

Throughout the conference, delegates were invited to respond to the presentations, as well as to ask questions and participate in discussions through the question and answer panel.

A series of workshops and a clinical audit marketplace were also held in order to consult on the new products and resources being developed for clinical audit.

Several key themes emerged from the conference, including:

- the relationship between clinical audit and quality improvement. There are quite wide ranging views on how audit is defined, and how it complements other quality improvement approaches
- the correlation between continuous monitoring and traditional audit
- the need to engage clinicians and senior managers to ensure that the findings of audit are acted upon

Conclusion

The quality agenda is challenging and will take time to achieve. However, the conference met its main objectives and ensured participants went away with a sense that audit is now part of a wider process to drive quality. Within audit there is coherent and strategic thinking, with an organised and informed structure in the shape of HQIP to drive it forward.

Those involved in local clinical audit were given the opportunity to share experiences, raise issues, and meet their peers, feeling part of a wider movement to improve audit quality.

Above all, the conference was a unique opportunity to harness the energy and commitment of a group of professionals to help shape the future of clinical audit. The addresses, comments made in workshops and discussion in the plenary sessions will find their way into the strategic plans of HQIP.